

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 4-23 are now present in this application. Claims 1, 4, 7, 12 and 18 are independent.

Amendments have been made to claims 4, 6, 7, 8, 12-14, 16, 18 and 19, claim 3 has been canceled, and claims 21-23 have been added. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references supplied with the Information Disclosure Statements filed January 27, 2005 and June 28, 2005, and for providing Applicants with initialed copies of the PTO-1449 or PTO-SB08 forms filed therewith.

Drawings

Since no objection has been received, Applicants assume that the drawings are acceptable and that no further action is necessary. Confirmation thereof in the next Office Action is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Grondahl (US Patent 2,562,843) or JP 61-128955 in view of either Rehm (US Patent 2,322,390) or JP10-253006). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 has been

cancelled, thus rendering the rejection of claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

With regard to the rejection of claim 19, while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants have amended claim 19 to depend from objected-to allowable claim 18, thereby automatically overcoming the rejection of claim 19, and placing claims 19 and 20 into condition for allowance.

Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Allowed and Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 1 and 2 are allowed, and that claims 4-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. As set forth above, Applicants have amended claims 4, 7, 12 and 18 to include the limitations of base claim 3. Independent claims 4, 7, 12 and 18 should therefore be in condition for allowance. Also, claims 5, 6, 8-11, 13-17, 19 and 20 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claims 4, 7, 12 and 18, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claims 4, 7, 12 or 18 which are believed to be allowable.

New Claims

Claims 21-23 have been added for the Examiner's consideration. Applicants submit that claims 21-23 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 7, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claim 4 that is believed to be allowable.

In addition, claims 21-23 recite further limitations that are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Consideration and allowance of claims 21-23 are respectfully requested.

Additional Cited References

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but have merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

Conclusion

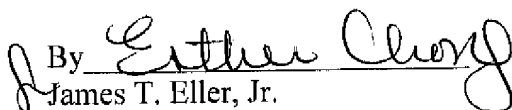
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to the undersigned, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: February 5, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By  #40,953

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